

## 20,000 women to be screened for HPV in Mongolia this year

ULAN BATOR: At least 20,000 women in their 30s and 40s will undergo screening for the human papillomavirus (HPV), a leading cause of cervical cancer, in Mongolia this year, local media reported, citing the country's health ministry.

The ministry emphasised that cervical cancer is preventable and urged women in the targeted age group to actively participate in the screening programme.

According to the National Centre for Communicable Diseases, cervical cancer is the second most common cancer among women in Mongolia and the fourth most common cancer nationwide.

In 2025, Mongolia, with a population of 3.5 million, recorded 551 new cases of cervical cancer and 171 related deaths, Xinhua news agency reported.

HPV is a common sexually transmitted infection. Almost all sexually active people will be infected at some point in their lives, usually without symptoms.

HPV can affect the skin, genital area and throat.

Condoms help prevent HPV but do not offer total protection because they do not cover all the genital skin.

HPV usually goes away on its own without treatment. Some HPV infections cause genital warts.

## Poshan Pakhwada to focus on maximising brain development in early childhood: MoS

Scientific evidence indicates that over 85 per cent of brain development occurs by the age of six

NEW DELHI

THE government is set to celebrate the 8th edition of 'Poshan Pakhwada', reaffirming the commitment to improving nutritional outcomes across the country.

According to the Ministry of Women and Child Development, the Pakhwada from April 9-23 focuses on "Maximising Brain Development in the First Six Years of Life", recognising that early childhood — particularly the first 1,000 days — is critical for brain development, physical growth, and overall well-being.

Scientific evidence indicates that over 85 per cent of brain development occurs by the age of six, underscoring the importance of optimal nutrition, responsive caregiving, and early learning.

Underscoring the importance of nutrition, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has emphasised that "a well-nourished child is the foundation of a strong nation. Poshan Abhiyaan is not just a government programme, but a people's movement to ensure holistic nutrition for every mother and child."

The national launch of 'Poshan Pakhwada 2026'



Minister of State for Women and Child Development, Savitri Thakur

will take place in Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi, under the visionary leadership of Union Minister for Women and Child Development, Annpurna Devi, in the presence of Minister of State for Women and Child Development, Savitri Thakur.

The key focus areas under this year's theme include Maternal and Child Nutrition; Early Stimulation for Brain Development (0-3 years); Play-Based Education in Early Years (3-6 years); Role of Parents and Community in Minimising Screen Time; and Strengthening Anganwadi Centres through Commu-

nity Participation - Enhancing infrastructure and service delivery through Jan Bhagidari and CSR.

During the Pakhwada, activities will be organised across states and Union Territories through Anganwadi Centers, with participation from mothers, caregivers, families, community institutions, and local bodies. These will include Poshan Panchayats, awareness sessions, early stimulation activities, play-based learning initiatives, and campaigns promoting healthy lifestyles and reduced screen time among young children, according to the government.

## Maharashtra clears MahaGeoTech, resilience programme

To accelerate administrative efficiency using cutting-edge technology

### Maha Tech Equation

- Serve as a hub for geospatial innovation and data-driven decision-making
- Responsible for building and maintaining geospatial portals
- The institute will receive an initial grant of Rs25 crore
- MSMEs will receive specialised credit facilities and insurance security

MUMBAI

IN a bid to modernise governance and strengthen disaster management, the Maharashtra Cabinet chaired by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis has approved two major initiatives: the establishment of the Maharashtra Geotechnological Application Centre (MahaGeoTech) and the implementation of the Maharashtra Resilience Development Programme.

To accelerate administrative efficiency using cutting-edge technology, the government has cleared the deck for the formation of MahaGeoTech.

This dedicated entity will serve as a hub for geospatial



innovation and data-driven decision-making. It will consist of four primary divisions comprising modern technology, research and training, geospatial innovation and entrepreneurship, and administration and accounts.

The modern technology division will focus on Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Internet of Things, Image Processing, and Photogrammetry. It will oversee data quality, integrity, and security protocols. It will also be responsible for building and maintaining geospatial portals, designing software applications, and integrating diverse datasets to solve complex administrative problems.

The Research and Training Division is tasked with research and development in geospatial technology and conducting academic programmes for students and professionals.

Headquartered in Mumbai, the institute will receive an initial grant of Rs25 crore. It aims to streamline government workflows by providing

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precise spatial analytics and fostering a culture of technical innovation within state departments.

Further, the state cabinet also approved the Maharashtra Resilience Financing Programme, a new concept utilising capital and global funding to mitigate disaster impacts.

The programme will utilise a Rs165 crore fund from the World Bank. Relief will be extended to disaster-affected citizens through home loan concessions.

Furthermore, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises, unorganised sector workers, women entrepreneurs, and small construction businesses will receive specialised credit

facilities and insurance security. The Maharashtra Institution for Transformation will serve as the implementation unit to handle financial aid during floods, heatwaves, and cyclones.

The programme places special emphasis on the Krishna and Panchganga river basins. Comprehensive plans will be drafted to reduce flood risks in Kolhapur, Sangli, and Ichalkaranji. The Maharashtra Soil and Water Conservation Corporation will act as the project implementation group for works in these river zones.

A Project Appraisal Committee, co-chaired by the Minister for Disaster Management and the Minister for Water Resources, has been sanctioned to monitor progress and ensure effective execution, said the government release.

By integrating high-end geospatial data and creating a robust financial safety net, the Maharashtra government aims to build a state that is both technologically advanced and disaster-resilient, noted the release.

## Indian firms more agile, AI optimistic despite pay challenges: Report

NEW DELHI

INDIAN companies are far ahead of global peers on organisational agility, restructuring plans and AI adoption, but leaders must also focus on fair pay to retain talent, a report said.

The report from Mercer said 54 per cent of C-suite leaders in India expect AI's primary role to be transforming the business and driving innovation in the next two years compared to 42 per cent globally. Further, 66 per cent of HR leaders planned work redesign to achieve optimal human-machine capability.

The report, based on nearly 12,000 global respondents including 650 from India, revealed that 80 per cent of India's C-suite plan to simplify reporting lines, significantly ahead of the global average of 59 per cent, while 76 per cent intend to flatten hierarchies,



compared to 44 per cent globally.

Around 64 per cent Indian respondents expect to create self-organising teams, versus 49 per cent globally. Overall agility scores in India are also marked higher, with 48 per cent rating their agility as high compared to just 29 per cent worldwide, particularly in business agility at 52 per cent and product agility at 42 per cent.

Gen Z accounted for 43 per cent of India's workforce compared to 33 per cent globally.

Meanwhile, 54 per cent employees cited pay as the top reason for plans to leave the organisation, even while Indian employees place exceptional value on purpose.

## Aimtron Electronics secures orders worth ₹57 cr

MUMBAI

Gujarat-based Aimtron Electronics has secured turnkey orders worth Rs57.66 crore for industrial IoT (IIoT) and AI surveillance solutions. The projects are slated for completion within the next 12 months, the electronics system design and manufacturing (ESDM) firm said.

The order win marks a significant expansion of the company's domestic footprint, reinforcing its capability to deliver complex, design-led manufacturing solutions at scale, Aimtron said.

"As demand builds for IIoT, AI-led systems, and advanced box-build products, we remain focused on quality delivery, timely execution, and strengthening our manufacturing-led design and engineering capabilities to serve evolving industry requirements," said Sneha Shah, Whole Time Director, Aimtron Electronics.

## IEA praises Modi for fast breeder reactor milestone

MUMBAI

THE International Energy Agency (IEA) on Wednesday praised India and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the successful achievement of the first criticality of the 500 MWe Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR), calling it an important technological milestone. In a post on X, the global energy body lauded Indian scientists and engineers for the achievement, which comes after years of development.

The IEA said the reactor will use significantly less nuclear fuel compared to conventional reactors and would help pave the way for a "pathway towards a closed fuel cycle".

The remarks come after India's PFBR at Kalpakkam attained first criticality on Monday, marking the start of a controlled nuclear fission



chain reaction. Earlier, PM Modi had termed the achievement a "defining step" in India's civil nuclear journey.

He also noted that it advances the second stage of the country's three-stage nuclear programme.

"The indigenously designed and built Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor at Kalpakkam has attained criticality," the Prime Minister said in a post on X.

He added that the advanced reactor, capable of producing more fuel than it consumes, reflects the country's scientific and engineering strength and is a decisive step towards harnessing vast thorium reserves in the third stage of the programme.

## Striking sand sculpture at Puri Beach salutes frontline workers

PURI

RENNOWNED sand artist and Padma Shri awardee Sudarsan Pattnaik created a striking sand sculpture at Puri Beach in Odisha, saluting frontline workers and spreading the message, "Together for Health, Stand with Science".

The elaborate sculpture, standing approximately six feet tall, was crafted using several tonnes of sand and showcased Pattnaik's signature style of blending art with social messaging. Assisted by students from his sand art institute, the installation depicted human figures symbolising unity, compassion, and the crucial role of science in safeguarding global health.

Observed annually on April 7, World Health Day aims to draw attention to



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pressing global health issues and inspire collective action toward improving public well-being. Pattnaik's artwork served as a visual reminder of the importance

of solidarity, scientific awareness, and shared responsibility in building a healthier and safer world.

Pattnaik emphasised the need to support science and strengthen healthcare systems in an ever-evolving global landscape. He urged people to adopt healthier lifestyles and contribute to the well-being of society. Through his sand art, he paid tribute to healthcare workers and others who serve tirelessly day and night for the betterment of humanity.



### THE POLITICA

Nothing political about it

BASSEM MROUE, JON GAMBRELL, SAMY MAGDY & SAM

IRAN, the United States and Israel said they reached a deal for a two-week ceasefire, with Tehran saying it would negotiate with the United States in Islamabad beginning Friday.

Trump initially said Iran proposed a "workable" 10-point plan, but he later called the plan fraudulent without elaborating.

Trump's threats to launch devastating strikes on Iran hit a new extreme hours before the ceasefire when he warned, "A whole civilization will die tonight, never to be brought back again," if Iran failed to make a deal that included reopening the vital Strait of Hormuz.

In a statement on Wednesday morning, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said it supports Trump's decision to suspend strikes against Iran for two weeks, but that it doesn't include the war with Hezbollah in Lebanon, where more than 1,500 people have been killed.

Egypt says Israel must stop attacking Lebanon

Egypt has called for Israel to immediately stop attacks on Lebanon as part of US President Donald Trump's two-week ceasefire declaration in the region.

The Egyptian Foreign Ministry said in a statement that "the

## Trump pulls back on threats as US, Israel and Iran agree on 2-week ceasefire

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situation in Lebanon remains critical". "This declaration of a cessation of military operations must be reflected in Israel immediately ceasing its repeated attacks on brotherly Lebanon," it said.

Tel Aviv residents are cautious about ceasefire

Residents of Tel Aviv, Israel, are taking news of the ceasefire with a grain of salt. "A lot is unclear, the feeling is sour," Zamir Bakal told The Associated Press, adding, "we're looking forward positively and hope that good things will come out of it."

After another night disrupted by a blaring missile warning after the announced ceasefire, some residents were jogging on the city's long promenade and playing beach volleyball.

Yehuda Raveh said he believes Israel will be "in a slightly better position" if the agreement extends to the fighting with the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah, but he added, "we did not solve our problems."

Dan Tzivoni decried what he sees as Israel's lack of political independence, saying Israel "became a little bit a puppet of the United States" and claiming it doesn't know how to translate "very impressive military achievements" into political achievements.

Nizan Yogeve sounded optimis-

tic despite the tentative nature of the announcement, saying, "A temporary agreement will become permanent, and we will return to routine."

Iraq reopens airports and airspace

Iraq's Civilian Aviation Authority chief Bankin Rehani said the country's airports and airspace have reopened following the ceasefire between the US, Israel and Iran.

He made the announcement hours after the two-week cessation of hostilities mediated by Pakistan went into effect.

Airspace and flights throughout the region have been disrupted by the war. Baghdad and Irbil's international airports were shuttered and the latter faced threats and attacks.

Displaced Lebanese wait for ceasefire clarity

Families displaced by the Israel-Hezbollah war scrambled to pack belongings in hopes of returning home after Pakistan said the Iran war ceasefire would include Lebanon.

But Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed his country's military would press on in Lebanon.

At a displacement camp along Beirut's waterfront, families whiplashed by the conflicting statements expressed confusion and despair.

"We're just stuck," said Fadi



Zaydan, 35. "We can't take this anymore, sleeping in a tent, not showering, the uncertainty."

His family set out Wednesday for the coastal city of Sidon, where he said they would wait before venturing further south to their abandoned home in Nabatieh.

Others said they expected Israel to escalate operations against Iran-backed Hezbollah even as guns fell silent elsewhere.

"Israel isn't going to give up," said Shadi Chehadeh, 47, who fled his southern village of Zefata to sleep in his car in Beirut. "They want our land."

India urges secure trade routes after ceasefire

India's foreign ministry on Wednesday welcomed the ceasefire in the Middle East Asia and said it expects the "unimpeded

freedom of navigation and global flow of commerce" through the Strait of Hormuz.

The ministry in a statement said the fighting has caused "immense suffering" and disrupted global energy supplies and trade.

"We have consistently advocated de-escalation, dialogue and diplomacy to bring an early end to the conflict," the ministry said.

European leaders call for war

The leaders of France, Spain and Finland and top European Union leaders all issued statements welcoming the two-week pause in fighting but urging swift negotiations to bring the war to a permanent end.

French President Emmanuel Macron described the planned pause in fighting between Iran, the United States and Iran as "a

very good thing" and said he hopes it "will be fully respected in the whole region and permit negotiations to be held".

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez, who has been Europe's loudest critic of the US and Israel's military actions in the Middle East, criticised the threats of violence that preceded the ceasefire announcement.

"The Government of Spain will not applaud those who set the world on fire just because they show up with a bucket," Sánchez wrote on X, adding, "What's needed now: diplomacy, international legality, and PEACE."

Ursula von der Leyen, the European Commission President, and Antonio Costa, the head of the European Council, praised Pakistani mediation efforts in social media posts Wednesday.

The Turkish and Austrian foreign ministries issued statements welcoming the deal and calling for further negotiations. Austria also offered to host talks.

Regional official says ceasefire includes Lebanon

A regional official said Lebanon is included in the two-week ceasefire between the US and Iran.

The official, who is involved in negotiations and spoke on condition of anonymity, said the pause applies to "all fronts including Lebanon".

Pakistan, which is a key mediator, has said the ceasefire includes the fighting in Lebanon.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, however, said Wednesday that the ceasefire won't stop his country's fight against Hezbollah in Lebanon.

China says it will play constructive role toward peace

China welcomed the ceasefire agreed between Iran and the United States but did not confirm any direct talks with Iran that might have led to acceptance of the agreement.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning also welcomed efforts by Pakistan and others, adding without elaborating that China "did its own efforts".

"We have been advocating for peace talks and a ceasefire," Mao said in Beijing, adding that Chinese authorities will "keep playing a constructive role" toward peace.

China and Pakistan agreed days earlier to promote a five-point proposal aimed at restoring peace in the Middle East after a monthlong war. The five points they said they would pursue included an immediate cessation of hostilities, the start of peace talks as soon as possible, ensuring the safety of nonmilitary targets, guaranteeing navigation safety through the Strait of Hormuz and safeguarding the primacy of the UN Charter.